

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 05130 062128Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-03 COME-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

OPIC-02 SP-02 AID-10 H-01 L-02 FEA-01 INT-01 STR-01

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R 062046Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4103

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 5130

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN

SUBJECT: PAPAL NUNCIO'S VIEWS ON CURRENT SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

REF: CARACAS 5115

1. AT MY INVITATION, THE PAPAL NUNCIO CAME FOR LUNCH TODAY. HE CONCURS IN OUR ANALYSIS THAT THERE IS A GENERAL STATE OF CONFUSION THROUGHOUT VENEZUELA OVER THE SOMEWHAT BREATHLESS MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

2. HOWEVER, THE NUNCIO'S READING OF THE SITUATION IS CONSIDERABLY MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN OURS. ADMITTEDLY WE HAVE BEEN TALKING TO THE HEADS OF VERY LARGE BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES, WHEREAS HIS INFORMATION COMES FROM THE PROVINCES VIA A SERIES OF BISHOPS AND MISSIONARIES. NEVERTHELESS, THE NUNCIO REPORTS WIDESPREAD CONCERN AMONG SMALL INDUSTRIES OVER THE DECREE RAISING WAGES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME IMPOSING A PRICE FREEZE. HE QUOTED A VISIT FROM THE BISHOP OF BARCELONA THIS MORNING WHO SAID THAT IN THAT IMPORTANT PROVINCIAL CAPITAL, VENEZUELAN SMALL INDUSTRIALISTS HAD ALREADY DISMISSED 1500 WORKERS BECAUSE THEY DID NOT SEE THEIR WAY CLEAR TO PAYING A 25 PER CENT ACROSS-THE-BOARD WAGE INCREASE.

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PAGE 02 CARACA 05130 062128Z

3. THE NUNCIO AGREED WITH MY ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT: NAMELY, THAT TWO TITULAR MINISTERS WITH WHOM WE SHOULD EXPECT MOSTLY TO DEAL -- FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MINES AND HYDROCARBONS -- ARE MERELY EXECUTORS OF POLICY AND THAT THE FOUR CHIEF MINISTERIAL ADVISERS OF PRESIDENT PEREZ ARE GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ, HECTOR HURTADO, PEREZ GUERRERO AND CARMELO LAURIA. THE NUNCIO HAD A GOOD WORD TO SAY FOR RAMON ESCOVAR, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY, WHO, HE SAID, HAD NEGOTIATED THE LAST AGREEMENT BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE VATICAN. ON THE CONTRARY, HE WAS QUITE DEPRECATORY OF THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR PINERUA WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS A "DELINCUENTE". I REMINDED HIM, HOWEVER, THAT THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR WAS AN ALUMNUS OF MANY POLITICAL PRISONS AND THAT ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, HE STILL HAD CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ.

MCCLINTOCK

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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